Collection #
M 0992
CT 2133–2145
OM 0488

WORLD WAR I ORAL HISTORIES COLLECTION, CA, 1907–1919; 1980–1982

Collection Information

Biographical Sketch

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Contents

Cataloging Information

Processed by

Paul Brockman
July 2010

Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

www.indianahistory.org

COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 box manuscripts; 1 box printed books and pamphlets; 1 box (7 folders) of photographs; 13 cassette tapes; 1 oversized photograph; 1 oversized folder
COLLECTION DATES:	Ca. 1907–1919; 1980–1982

PROVENANCE:	Military History Section, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, 1980–1982; Wayne Sanford, Indianapolis, Indiana, December 2006
RESTRICTIONS:	None
COPYRIGHT:	
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained from the Indiana Historical Society.
ALTERNATE FORMATS:	
RELATED HOLDINGS:	Frank Dillman (M 0914); Perry Lesh (M 0926); Arthur Gray (M 0946)
ACCESSION NUMBER:	2006.0504
NOTES:	

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Biographies of interviewees in the collection are:

Eugene B. Bailey (1894–1984) was born in New Castle, Henry County, Indiana, and was inducted into the Army in August, 1918. Because of the segregation policy in the Army at that time he was attached to black units, the 28th Company, 7th Battalion, 163rd Depot Brigade until September, 1918, when he was assigned to Company L, 809th Pioneer Infantry at Camp Dodge, Iowa. He was promoted to corporal in October, 1918 and eventually was elevated to the rank of sergeant. He served in France and to the United States for hospital confinement until March 1918 and was mustered out at Camp Zachary Taylor in Louisville, the following month. After the war, Bailey worked for the Pennsylvania Railroad until he retired in 1957. In 1967 he was appointed Superior Court Bailiff in Henry County.

Henry Louis Chesick (1891–1986) was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, but later moved to New Castle, Henry County. In November, 1917 he was commissioned a First Lieutenant form the Officers' Reserve Class, at Fort Benjamin Harrison. He was promoted to captain in November, 1918, and was a member of the 325th Machine Gun Battalion. Chesick was discharged in January, 1919, and began working the Hoosier Manufacturing Company which produced kitchen cabinets. He later went into the retail business where he worked for thirty-two years.

Ann Cranston (1888–1989) was born in Burton, New York and was trained as a nurse in Albany, New York finishing her training in 1914. She then worked as a private duty nurse in the New York specializing in tuberculosis cases. Cranston enlisted in the Army in 1918, and was assigned to a T.B. hospital in West Haven, Connecticut. After the war Cranston went to work as a Red Cross Nurse in Concord, New Hampshire. Cranston worked as a nurse for about ten years and left the profession when she married until later in life when returned to work in a retirement home. Cranston came to Indiana in the 1970s.

Theodore Denny (1897–1989) was born in Freetown, Indiana. He was attending high school when he enlisted in the U. S. Navy in May, 1918. After basic training at Great Lakes, Illinois, Denny was assigned to the Naval Air Station at Pauliach France for seven months. After the war he returned to Freetown, finished high school and worked for Chrysler in New Castle, Indiana for forty-two years.

Frank D. Levinson (1921–1988) was born in Noblesville, Indiana, the son of prominent Indianapolis men's clothing retailer, Harry Levinson. After graduating from the University of Michigan in 1917 and enlisted in the U. S. Army in July of the same year. Levinson served in the Quartermaster Corps at Camp Funston, Kansas. After the war, he returned to work in the family business.

Elmer Staton (1895–1987) was born in Salt Lick, Kentucky and worked in the oil fields in Estill County, Kentucky when he enlisted in May, 1918. Staton was assigned to Battery F, 142nd Field Artillery, 39th Infantry Division where he was given duties of "wagoner" (motorcycle driver/messenger carrier). Staton returned to the oil fields after the war. In 1936 Staton moved to Henry County, Indiana and spent the remainder of his life farming in the Middletown/Cadiz area.

Carl Strother (1890–1981) was born in Clark County , Indiana. Orphaned at an early age, Strother enlisted in the U. S. Army in December, 1908, and served on the Mexican border with the regular army from April–November, 1914 rising to the rank of first sergeant. In 1917 he was commissioned a first lieutenant in the 6th Infantry and placed in command of Company F and was twice wounded in the France, first in August, 1918 and more seriously in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive in October, 1918. Strother was discharged in October, 1919 and moved to Henry County where he farmed until 1930. He then moved to New Castle where he held several public service jobs including bailiff, 1930–36, and director of the newly created welfare department, 1936–57.

Howard G. Taylor (1889–1990) was born in Boonville, Indiana, and graduated from Purdue University. He worked and taught in mechanical engineering field most of his career. Taylor served in the U. S. Army from March, 1918 until April 1919 being stationed at San Antonio, Texas where he served in the Quartermaster Mechanical Repair Shop 304. He also played the trombone in unit's band.

Sources:

Information in Collection.

Ancestry, Library Edition http://www.ancestrylibrary.com/default.aspx accessed 12 July 2010.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection consists of oral history interviews of World War I veterans conducted by Wayne Sanford representing the then Military History Section of the Indiana Historical Society, 1980–1982. Also included are original photographs and printed materials given to Mr. Sanford by several of the interviewees.

Among the subjects discussed in the interviews is Eugene Bailey disusing segregation in the Army during World War I and racism he experienced in a Louisville clothing shop at the end of the war; Harry Chesick discussing his role as an officer in the Student Army Training Corps in Boston; Ann Cranston relating her duties as an Army nurse in a tuberculosis hospital in Connecticut; Theodore Denny telling of the activities at a Naval Air Station in France; Frank Levinson talking about the challenges of tracking uniforms, typewriters and weapons especially at the war's end;

Elmer Staton discussing his duties as a motorcycle messenger carrier in France; Carl Strother relating battlefield experiences in the Meuse Argonne Offensive; and Howard Taylor telling of experiences in the regimental band in Texas. All of the interviewees also discuss their lives, careers and families before and after their time in the military.

In 2006 Mr. Sanford donated many of the personal items the interviewees had given him at the time of the interviews. Included are photographs from Ann Cranston, military manuals, pamphlets and printed itemsfrom Carl Strother and a number of unidentified photographs from WW I. There is also a historical folder regarding the Last Man's Club of New Castle compiled by Wayne Sanford and Frank Dillman. Many of those interviewed were members of the organization.

Although there is no interview, there is a short diary from 1918 along with photographs of Guy D. Hamblen. Hamblen (1896–1974) was born in Columbus, Indiana. He served in Battery D. of the 139th Field Artillery in France. According to the 1930 census Hamblen was married and working as a dispatcher for an electric railway in Columbus. He died in Indianapolis

Other interviews conducted by Mr. Sanford at this time along with related photographs and correspondence are in separate collections: Frank Dillman (M 0914); Perry Lesh (M 0926); and Arthur Gray (M 0946).

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CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: http://opac.indianahistory.org/
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, M 0992).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.